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The Sketch

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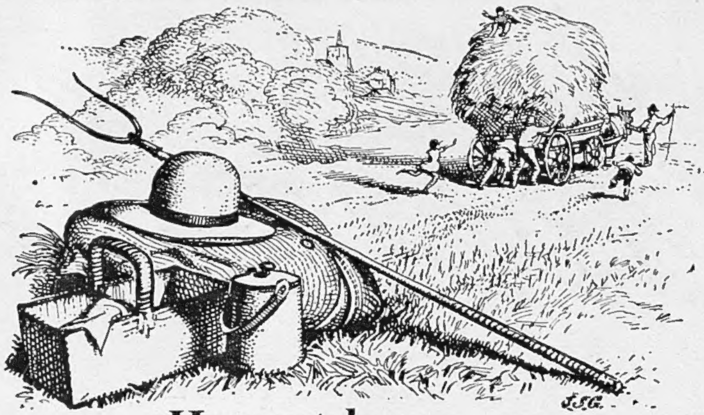

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CVS-114

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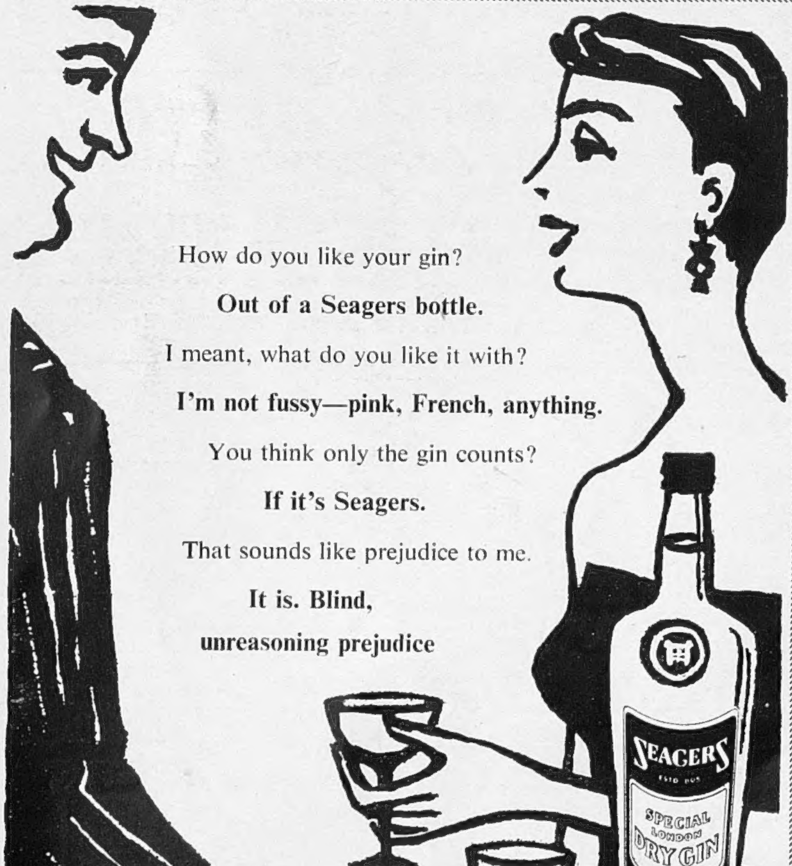

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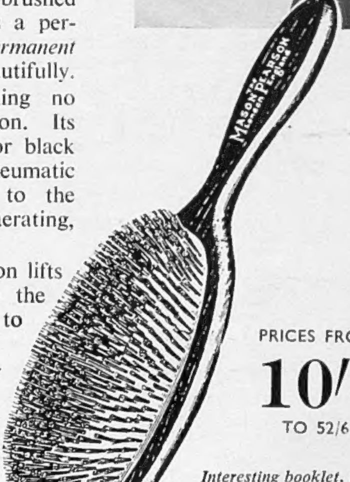

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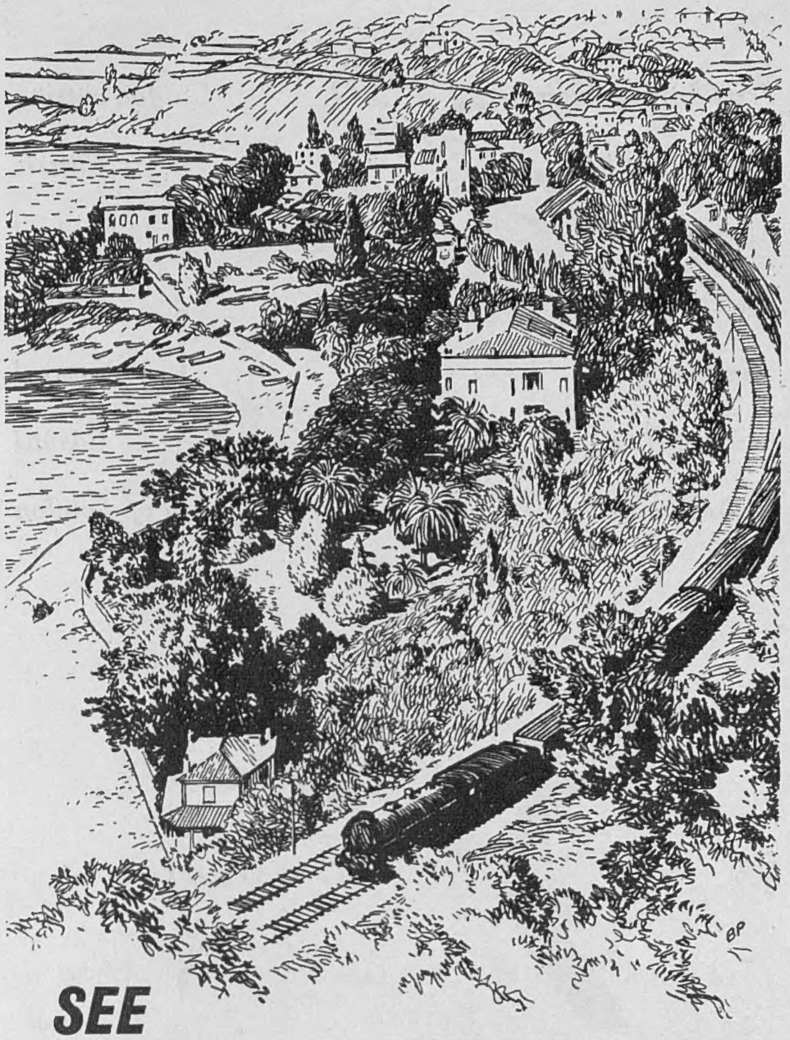

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CVS–86

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The Sketch

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1954

PRETTY AND POPULAR

The Capitol Dome makes a striking background as Cynthia and Mary, pretty twin eighteen-year-old daughters of Sir Roger Makins, British Ambassador to the United States, pose on the steps of the House of Representatives in Washington. The girls are delighted to be in Washington, the birthplace of their mother, who met Sir Roger when he was Third Secretary at the Embassy, and go sight-seeing at every opportunity. They have their full share of social activities: debutantes of the 1953 London season, they had a second debut when they joined their parents last summer, and are now highly popular figures in the Washington social scene.

Photo.: George Konig.

THE GINGER-BREAD WITCH.—The witch is dead, and the ginger-bread boys and girls come back to life. Anna Pollak as Hansel and Marion Studholme as Gretel in the Sadler's Wells production of the children's opera by Humperdinck.

Our Motley Notes

BY TOBY O'BRIEN

THE annual and lucrative invasion of Monte Carlo by the international teams and individuals taking part in the Monte Carlo Rally, by a curious—and no doubt purely fortuitous—touristic coincidence, covers the twin celebrations of the birthday of the reigning Prince Rainier, and the patron of the Principality, Ste. Devôte. Of these celebrations, I have always found the patronal festival the more agreeable. More than once, while my more motor-conscious friends were at the Casino dividing their conversation between reminiscences of their trip south and the possibilities of the next number to turn up on the roulette wheel, I have been—*quorum pars minima fui*—with the crowd of local notabilities, including the Prince and the Bishop, at the harbour awaiting the arrival of the relics of Ste. Devôte.

These relics, which are normally kept in the church in the Condamine dedicated to the saint, are put into a small sailing-boat earlier on the eve of her festival, and brought back after nightfall across the Mediterranean, to be disembarked on the shores of Monaco. This is a re-enactment of the old story that Ste. Devôte was one of the earliest Christian martyrs—a legendary lady, who, if I remember rightly, chose straight death to " a fate worse than." Her body was put into a boat on the shores of Imperial Rome, and under miraculous guidance arrived in Monaco. Loud cheers from the local populace greet the arrival of the relics, which are then carried with Latin enthusiasm back to the church which bears the martyr's name, the Prince and the Bishop leading the lively torchlit procession. After a service of gratifying brevity in the church, the congregation emerges onto the *place* in front, where the boat has meantime been placed on a mound of faggots, which are then set ablaze amid what would, in Parliamentary language, be called " cheers and counter-cheers."

My cheerful young motorist friends could do worse than attend this celebration. A friend who is statistically-minded assures me that it will take them at least two-and-a-half hours—and this, on a rough calculation, will save them an average loss (according to the experts) of at least 8270 francs at the Casino.

The brevity of the service to which I have referred should be emulated here. Of the two churches I attend, I always choose Royal Hospital in preference to Holy Trinity, Brompton, during the school holidays, as the former has a most admirable military brevity—only one lesson and no sermon ever lasting longer than eight minutes. This succinctness gives Chelsea at least a forty-minute negative lead over Knightsbridge—no small consideration with the young.

The old Marques de Torre Soto—the head of the Gonzalez branch of the great Gonzalez Byass clans—used to let it be known that he would be attending a given church in Jerez, and that he expected the Mass to be quick. He would stump up the aisle, sit down in a seat in front, ostentatiously pull out a vast watch, glare at the priest and nod to him to begin—and woe-betide the unfortunate padre who couldn't live up to the old gentleman's view of the minimum due to an almost equal Power.

FROM year to year I deplore the passing of the old-fashioned pantomime. However, I was delighted on a recent visit to Brighton to see that at the Hippodrome the best and most robust traditions of this native (*pace* Lady Graham Little) art form were being splendidly maintained in the capable hands of Freddie Frinton and Billy Danvers, the Dame and Simple Simon respectively, in *Red Riding Hood.* Freddie Frinton, as Dame Trot, almost came up to my memories of the great Dames of the past, of whom, alas! there is only Mr. George Lacey left—that inimitable Mother Goose. Dames of the panto (like Dames of the British Empire), thank goodness, do not change—though I rather doubt whether any of the distinguished ladies of the latter category habitually shed, on going to bed, seventeen full-length petticoats, and six or seven pairs of what, to my untutored masculine eye, appeared to be drawers, across the southern aspect of which was written, in large letters, "The End."

THE ways of the Home Office, and the Probation Officers attached by them to Police Courts, are indeed inscrutable. In a peculiarly bad case of larceny and bad faith by a foreign woman in this country, the female concerned was recommended to be deported by the magistrate. She has, however, apparently been allowed to stay by the Home Office, and is now in another job.

No doubt this is due to the normal process whereby the Probation Officer had consulted a psychiatrist, who again, no doubt, had come to the conclusion that the woman's propensity for theft was due to the fact that her father, as a small boy, was beaten by a brutal farmer for stealing apples on a Sunday. I don't know why this theory comes to me (and I want no "trick cyclist" to tell me). It does, however, remind me of the story which my father used to tell, of the young gentleman who wished to win the hand of the local vicar's daughter. Being, however, somewhat raffish, his suit was frowned on. (Nowadays, you don't ask Father, you take her to the "Four Hundred.") In order to prove his sincerity and moral rectitude, he asked the vicar whether he could be allowed the privilege of taking the Sunday School class. To the vicar's surprise, he "packed them in." One warm June Sunday afternoon, the vicar was passing the open window of the Sunday School, and could not forbear eavesdropping on his prospective son-in-law (as he had already mentally classed him), and finding out the secret of his hold on the young people. The young man was describing how little Johnny was so wicked as to go and steal apples from a neighbouring orchard on a Sunday. There, alas! Nemesis overtook him. For climbing up into a particularly large apple-tree, a bough broke, and he fell to the ground and was severely injured. "And what, my dear young friends, does this lesson teach us? Does it not teach us this? If you *must* steal apples on a Sunday—you should get a pole, and knock them down from below."

ANGRAVE'S ALPHABET

A for Antimony

ANTIMONY : *State of indifference to pecuniary reward.*

MY friends interested in the art world are curious about the fall in the value of paintings exported from this country during 1953. I have not been able to find much gloom among London's top art dealers and auctioneers about the world-demand for valuable pictures of almost any school. Almost everyone, however, is perturbed about the drying-up of supplies. Few, outside inner art circles, realise to how great an extent our private collections have been picked over during the past thirty years or so, and how many have been broken up and dispersed altogether.

The recently revealed sale of Renoir's "*Nu Dans l'Eau*" (flippantly and Philistinely translated by my fifteen-year-old eldest as "Starkers in the bath") by the Tate Gallery in 1944 has led to some rather uninformed criticism of Sir John Rothenstein, who is, in fact, one of our most enlightened and amusing custodians of public collections. (I remember him naughtily giving first prize at a fancy dress dance at the Randolph Hotel, in Oxford, to John Fothergill, then at the height of his *Innkeeper's Diary* fame as the host of the Spreadeagle, at Thame, for what John, in his delightfully mannered way, called his "normal" evening dress.) Those who say that "*Nu Dans l'Eau*" would have fetched much more now than it did nine years ago obviously don't realise that the prime object of its sale was to finance the purchase of two other paintings (by Matisse and Picasso respectively) which were available then, and which would not have waited until now to be bought. Certainly *I* wouldn't have minded having the capital appreciation on their increased value since 1944.

Even such astute appraisers of art value as Sir Alec Martin, of Christie's, and Vere Pilkington, the harpsichord-playing head of Sotheby's, admit that it is almost impossible for anyone to forecast which schools of painting will rise in value, and how far, at any given time. For example, anyone who could have foreseen the tremendous demand for Italian works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which has blown up in the last few years could have made a quick and easy fortune. Take, for instance, the Venetian scenes by Francesco Guardi. Canal paintings of the size and quality which Sir Alec knocked down at Derby House for about £2500 in the Rothermere sale in 1942 have since fetched £10,000 a piece. Fine examples by Canaletto have doubled and trebled in value in the same period. The chief reason for this is the tremendous urge among Italian collectors to re-acquire paintings by native masters of these periods, and most of those which have been publicly sold in London recently have found their way back to Italy. I wish we in this country had either the foreign currency or the patriotism to try and reverse the fifty-year-old trend which is sucking Britain dry of her great heritage in pictures, furniture, silver and glass.

During a visit to Florence last year, I noticed displayed on a special stand at the Uffizi, as a proud recent acquisition, a small painting of Elenor Zen, the girl-friend of old Slogger Jean-Jacques Rousseau, by the eighteenth-century Venetian artist Pietro Longhi. This picture, I remember being told, was sold on the lawn of a country house not a hundred miles from Oxford for £300 in the early part of the war. The knowledgeable gents who had assembled for the sale were moved out of their "*sangfroid habituel*" to actual applause for this remarkable price for a Longhi. All things, however, come to those with a sufficiently large bank balance to wait. A few years later this painting was sold in London at a price nearly ten times as great as the previous one.

I suppose that the English collection of Venetian pictures which Italian buyers would most like to get their hands on is that of Sir Alexander Korda, on whose behalf several fine examples—particularly of Guardis—have been bought in the leading auction sales during and since the war. Don't let us worry ourselves unduly, however, at our failure to cash in on these artistico-financial goodies. There is one infallible rule in these matters. Find out what O'Brien is buying—pictures, stocks or anything else—and sell like mad. You can't go wrong. It's sure to be the top of the market! Conversely, if he's selling—it's the bottom!

ON New Year's Eve, I was told a not unpleasing shaggy centipede story about the two boy earwigs sitting on a mushroom, watching a charming lady centipede passing by. As she disappeared sinuously into the grass, one nudged the other, and said: "I say, what a smashing pair of legs, pair of legs, pair of legs, pair of legs, pair of legs. . . ."

Joint hosts and hostesses for the evening were Mrs. Oliver Beckett, her sister, Mrs. Moyra de Lautour, Mr. Oliver Beckett and Mr. Freddie Silberman, here enjoying a few moments' respite from the festivities.

Mr. and Mrs. Alan Seymour-Haydon.

Mrs. James O'Shea and Mrs. O'Neill-Cavendish.

Guests relax between dances in a corner of the living-room. Above their heads, clusters of balloons hang from the beautiful carved oak ceiling, which is one of the sixteenth-century features of Oxhey Hall.

New Year's Eve—Country Style

Lovely old Oxhey Hall, in Hertfordshire, was the scene of a very gay and colourful fancy-dress party on New Year's Eve, when Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Beckett were joint host and hostess with Mrs. Beckett's sister, Mrs. Moyra de Lautour, and Mr. Freddie Silberman, to over sixty guests. The Hall was originally a sixteenth-century hunting-box and most of its lovelier features dating from that period have been retained, particularly in the interior, although during the eighteenth century a façade was built over the house, and the old entrance hall reconstructed. The beautiful old living-room, decorated with holly and mistletoe and balloons, lent itself perfectly to the occasion. A fork supper was served by candlelight in what is normally the day nursery, and the dining alcove (a singularly lovely room with Regency striped paper in sage green and white with a gold *motif*, and draperies in dark cyclamen) became a bar for the evening. Mr. Beckett, the second son of Lord Grimthorpe, is a dance music composer in his spare time, and was eventually cajoled into playing some of his own music for the delighted guests. There were many beautiful and some very unusual costumes—notably that worn by the men's first-prize winner, Mr. Joseph Deliss, who went as a gin bottle, carefully inscribed "100% proof spirit." Second-prize winner was Mr. Jack Attwood, as a very realistic Arab sheikh, and Mr. Aubrey ("Dr. Livingstone") Rix's two-bottle "binoculars" caused much amusement. Miss Chantal van Delft, who is in England to improve her very charming English, arrived back from a Christmas visit to her native Belgium in time for the party—and walked off with the ladies' first prize. Runner-up was Miss May Bowers, enchanting as a Victorian Miss in white. Prizes were presented by Mr. Beckett, who made some attempt to hide his identity behind a Santa Claus mask, and the party was given a novel touch by the appearance of Mrs. Beckett's mother, Mrs. O'Neill-Cavendish, who dressed as a gypsy and told fortunes to all the guests.

By "THE SKETCH" Special Photographer, Harold White.

Just before midnight, laughing, streamer-bedecked guests reach for the descending balloons—but balloons are short-lived trophies.

Maj. Robertson, Miss Angela Boys, Maj. Alan Waldron.

Miss Chantal van Delft, Mr. Oliver Beckett.

Colourful couple chatting together here are Mr. Jack Attwood, as an Arab chieftain, and Miss Patricia Dale, whose Eastern costume was much admired.

Mr. Oliver Beckett with Mr. Derek Oxley, in the garb of a Westernised Indian rajah, Mrs. Oxley, wearing a beautifully embroidered sari, and Mr. Aubrey Rix as a well-bearded Dr. Livingstone.

Spanish senorita Mrs. James O'Shea has discovered the mistletoe. With her are Mr. John Fox, Miss Patricia Dale and Mr. James O'Shea.

All the guests link hands together in traditional fashion, to bring in the New Year with a rousing chorus of Auld Lang Syne.

Our Bookshelf

THE LITTLE ARK. By Jan de Hartog. (*Hamish Hamilton ; 12s. 6d.*)

ALONG MY LINE. By Gilbert Harding. (*Putnam and Co. Ltd. ; 12s. 6d.*)

KATE TERRY GIELGUD : An Autobiography. (*Max Reinhardt ; 21s.*)

Reviewed by G. B. Stern

IT seems somewhat premature to speak of *The Little Ark*, by Jan de Hartog, as the best novel of 1954 (even supposing we read it at the end of 1953), but certainly the author was wonderfully inspired to let his vivid "documentary" of the floods which inundated Holland at the time when our own East Coast was also assaulted by the unmerciful sea be recorded through the eyes of the Pastor of Niewerland's two adopted children ; for Jan and Adinda were to make a curious discovery to reward the horror of their experiences after they were trapped in the belfry where they had been sent to ring the alarm : "Everybody has been frightened . . . and they 're always nice just afterwards." At that age the wildest happenings of escape and rescue rapidly become a matter of course :

'Jan heaved a happy sigh. All his life he had dreamed of talking man's talk, and suddenly here, on board this rusty ship, from the mouth of a real pirate wearing ear-rings, a necklace and a bowler hat, came the kind of words his mind had always vainly groped for. Just words, full of strength, wisdom and music, that meant nothing but freedom.'

"Outlandish" would perhaps be a too literal term to describe the fantastic conditions surrounding Jan and Adinda, transported from their first temporary "home" on Mrs. Ool's house-boat, to a fishing-smack manned by wild, brave pirates from the island of Urk :

'The children saw no road, but as the ships started to follow the line of the treetops, hugging them closely, they saw on the other side the tips of telegraph poles, occasionally bared by the waves. At the end of the long line of trees was the silhouette of a village. . . . "Ever been to Smorenburg, people ?" The children shook their heads. "Nice place," the captain shouted. "I 'd like to see its lower half some day" . . . the ship trembled as it gathered speed and slowly glided on along the street. They passed higher houses now, of which the top floors emerged from the water . . . a wide pond with choppy waves, which might be the village square.'

The amazing courage and resource of the Dutch people are set down with matter-of-fact acceptance of each gruesome detail ; and the sinister implications of the wireless messages that keep on coming through all the time are even funny in a sardonic sort of way, as in most major crises. But nothing strikes us as more poignant than the certainty expressed by Adinda, the Indonesian child, that her life must for ever continue along the same hopeless pattern :

'"They 'll send us to another ship, and then yet another, and then to an orphanage, and there we 'll stay till the next thing happens. . . . I 'd much rather go to an orphanage this time. . . . I don't want any more fathers and mothers."

"That 's a nice thing to say !" Jan said. "I like them."

Adinda shrugged her shoulders and said, "So did I."'

Nevertheless, our small fatalist is wrong ; and after a last perilous journey hidden in a coffin, when they are restored to the safety of their father's arms round them and their father to tell them what to do, perversely they begin to regret that "the glorious holiday in which all grown-ups loved them whatever they did or said was drawing to a close."

AN eighteenth-century Bishop of Belley with a Boswellian capacity for hero-worship once wrote of a visit paid him by Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, telling how in his anxiety not to miss one moment of edification to be had from his venerated master's behaviour, he bored holes in the panels between their two rooms (Sir, a most un-English procedure !) and through them was able to observe his saintly Father being as dignified, as gentle, as composed and reverential alone as while in company. But nowadays all panels are riddled with observation holes : radio, Press interviews, flashlight photographs, public appearances, television. How can celebrities hope to go on nestling under their leaves like modest violets in a shady grove ? To all these, Gilbert Harding's autobiography, *Along My Line*, comes as a voluntary contribution, evidencing a first-class mind that works not in superficial flashes, but from a solid basis ; amusing, ready-witted, enlightening and, within the bounds of good manners, provocative. But as thousands will want to explore for themselves what they hope may be the sensational secret soul of Gilbert Harding (in the unlikely event that he may have chosen to reveal it), there is no need here to give more than a bare *précis* of the motley career which has led to his Career in motley : brought up in a workhouse (though not for an Oliver Twist reason), educated at the Royal Wolverhampton School ; got a Third-Class Honours Degree at Cambridge ("That 's all right," said a flippant friend. "All you need to know about is Draco, the City States and the Peloponnesian War") ; stayed with an Anglican Community at Mirfield for a while ; decided he had no vocation for the life and was later (fulfilling G. K. Chesterton's prophecy) converted to Roman Catholicism ; against his will became a schoolmaster at Belmont, Tonbridge, Edinburgh, Nova Scotia, and elsewhere ; joined the Bradford Police Force (tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor !), ultimately achieved fame as a B.B.C. and television star . . . and the rest is far from silence.

This volume, besides being extremely funny in places, shows his rueful and very endearing capacity for "getting himself" ; and defends his traditional bursts of irascibility by a spirited counter-attack on the almost morbid excitement his presence attracted wherever he went :

'In the remotest country pub I would find myself being prodded and examined as if I were some visitation from another planet, and my ears would be afflicted by that now dreadfully familiar opening gambit : "You don't know me, but I know you."'

Speaking without resentment as one who has experienced a tap from Mr. Harding's cosh on an occasion when he was probably just getting his hand in for the evening, I entirely agree with his contention that to be outspoken must not be confused with rudeness ; "I may have my own code of courtesy," he says, and we have to own that, indeed, he can be and often is both courteous and tenderhearted, proving that he loves the human race but does not love its silly face. And, of course, if people *expect* a man to be rude (as Mr. Rochester may have said to Jane Eyre), it is only obliging not to disappoint them. For there seems to be a masochistic streak in audiences which, by the unnatural nature of radio and television, is provided with no natural outlet ; and Mr. Harding's astringency may have come to them as a thrice-welcome change after a period of intensive pampering.

"But I do wish that the future were over" . . . rarely has our common apprehension of the unknown been expressed with more brevity or deeper sadness than on this final sentence of an indubitably honest autobiography.

KATE TERRY GIELGUD—spellbinding names informed with the very magic of the theatre before radio and television brought us crazier food for autobiography. The author, Ellen Terry's niece, modestly supposes that she has substituted for a career her serene domestic happiness and a vicarious pride and delight at the triumphs of her family and friends ; in an affectionate foreword, her youngest son, Sir John Gielgud, thus pays tribute to her talent for sacrifice :

'I think it is high time she was given an opportunity to speak for herself. . . . Her long life of service has made her wise as well as generous.'

The pages glow with a pageantry of brilliant names, literally "household names" to a woman touching in her constant wonderment of "little did I think then" . . . Yet it is sometimes precisely a self-effacing figure who in the end stands out most clearly, and in this particular autobiography the author has (probably to her own astonishment) materialised as a writer with quite considerable power to evoke period and personality ; we can be especially grateful for her clear memories of Sir Henry Irving in all his greatest parts : Shylock, Charles I., the Vicar of Wakefield, Macbeth, Mephistopheles and Mathias in *The Bells*, once more immortalising an actor already immortal.

YOUR LIBRARY LIST

MR. PYE.
By Mervyn Peake. (*Heinemann ; 12s. 6d.*)

BUCK OF LORDENSHAW.
By Henry Tegner. (*Batchworth Press ; 10s. 6d.*)

DETECTION UNLIMITED.
By Georgette Heyer. (*Heinemann ; 10s. 6d.*)

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By Su Hua. (*Hogarth Press ; 15s.*)

THE STORY OF ENGLAND.
By Arthur Bryant. (*Collins ; 16s.*)

CHRISTMAS EVE.
By Alistair Cooke. (*Rupert Hart-Davis ; 7s. 6d.*)

Personality Parade—15

SIR ALEXANDER KORDA

Photographed for "THE SKETCH" by Houston Rogers.

The man behind the Big Ben trade-mark of London Films is a sixty-year-old Hungarian of dreamy, scholastic appearance. His voice is soft, his manner incredibly gentle, his grey eyes alight with quiet humour: the whole adds up to an almost hypnotic charm. He is generous to a fault, an æsthete in every sense, speaks several languages fluently and has read widely and thoroughly all his life. The strangest thing about him is the way in which he combines the characteristics of an artist with those of a singularly successful businessman. He inspires a remarkable degree of loyalty and admiration in those who work for him—and the results show in his films. His first in England, *Service for Ladies*, which he made for Paramount in 1931, brought him fame more or less overnight, and since then he has never looked back. Films such as *The Private Life of Henry VIII.*, *The Third Man*, *The Red Shoes*, *The Sound Barrier* and *The Mudlark*, made under his banner, help to keep it waving proudly and have done much for the prestige of the British film industry throughout the world. We photographed him at his delightful Piccadilly offices, which look out on to Hyde Park. "One should always work before a blank wall," he says. "It is impossible to concentrate in a room with a fine view." But the grey eyes twinkle in the way his staff know so well—as Sir Alexander laughs off another "impossibility."

The Mikado. Peter Goffin's setting for Act Two. Ivor Evans, and Ann Drummond-Grant as Katisha.

The Yeomen of the Guard. Including Ivor Evans, Fisher Morgan, Peter Pratt, Joyce Wright and Darrell Fancourt.

Cox and Box. Donald Adams (facing) as Cox, and Frederick Sinden as Box.

Recording the Joys of

"IN *the early performances, the ending was left indecisive*"; so runs the commentary on *The Yeomen of the Guard* in Roger Wood's fascinating *D'Oyly Carte Album* (A. and C. Black, Ltd.; 10s. 6d.). It was not that great comedian George Grossmith, but Henry Lytton who first brought out the pathos of Jack Point. How inconceivable it is that there should ever have been a time when an audience did not leave the theatre after a performance of *The Yeomen* gallant men with stiff upper lips and lumps in the throat, fair women whose eyes were bright behind the delicate netting of their veils, impressionable adolescents (and I was one) weeping openly and without shame—and all for Jack Point, who of all the great gallery most firmly captures our hearts.

Mr. Wood's album—eighty-six photographs (of which those printed in these pages are but a sample) with an historico-explanatory exegesis—deals with the operas in the present repertory of the D'Oyly Carte Company. We are left to sigh for *The Sorcerer* and *Princess Ida*, and to hope that, encouraged by the success of the recently revived *Ruddigore*, in time the Company will bring these also back to the stage, and so in time Mr. Wood will photograph

Photographed

Ruddigore. Sir Despard Murgatroyd, an enforcedly bad baronet, is embarrassed by Mad Margaret, his future wife.

Trial by Jury. The beautiful bridesmaids captivate the jury. The plaintiff makes eyes at the judge.

Iolanthe. The end of the opera. Peers and peris are about to take to flight.

H.M.S. Pinafore. The quarter-deck setting was designed and painted by Joseph and Phil Harker.

Gilbert and Sullivan

them, and we shall have, perhaps, another album.

Nevertheless, here is richness and variety a-plenty. Three little maids coquette beneath the cherry blossom. The rightful King of Barataria assumes his rightful throne, to the relief of certain egalitarian gondoliers. The Queen of the Fairies loses her heart unaccountably to a fine figure in uniform. An ex-office-boy looks to the comfort of the men of Her Majesty's Royal Navy. Bunthorne is be-garlanded, a sad song is sung by a sergeant of police, and Dick Dauntless dances a hornpipe in a light froth of nautical imagery.

The book, as our readers may imagine, wakens memories, not only of a tradition of fine work by a fine Company, but deep and personal memories of anxious amateur first nights, when the Mikado strained his larynx in the middle of that famous laugh, and a rickety flat came down and crowned the Peer's Chorus, already coroneted. Like it or not, the Gilbert and Sullivan operas are as much part of our lives as the plays of Shakespeare. We "did" them both at school, and we shall go on "doing" both for many years, please God, without doing them or ourselves much harm. J. B.

The Gondoliers. Leonard Osborn and Jeffrey Skitch, with Muriel Harding and Joyce Wright as the girls who wouldn't be left behind.

ger Wood.

Patience. Twenty love-sick maidens in mediæval attitudes. And all for Reginald.

The Pirates of Penzance. "Resume your ranks and legislative duties, And take my daughters, all of whom are beauties."

" Balloons descended from the ceiling "

Introduction to the Ball

"THE theme is Fun," said the girl at the Albert Hall. " Wear something funny, or hire a cloak." I had never been to the Chelsea Arts Ball before. It was a grand occasion. I pestered my friends for advice. " Grand, yes," observed my colleague, Olga, " but rough. A girl friend of mine came back with naked footprints all up one side of her white dress." " Which side ? " I asked. " The *out*side," said Olga, and the little bell on her typewriter rang in a manner that did not encourage further questions.

As we arrived, the outside of the Albert Hall was all policemen and taxis, with already, so early in the evening, a wistful gaggle of men in business suits hanging about the entrance doors to glimpse the gaiety within. Inside (if you shut your eyes to the signs that read CLOAKS, BUFFET and GENTLEMEN) the drabber aspects of our civilisation had vanished. It was like having a free run of the Colosseum at Rome during a spectacle under one of the less bloodthirsty Emperors. Tier upon tier of seats rose above the arena, the *plebs* above, the rich, the nobility, and the Press in boxes below. At midnight I stood, high at the back of a tier of seats, and watched the rough-house on the floor.

But this part of the spectacle, at least, was tame. The lions had already been fed, it seemed. Gourmets to a lion, they had no appetite for stringy Christians. It is a tradition that the decorations should be smashed to pieces by the dancers, and that the stewards should make a show of resistance to this proceeding. So the stewards, muscular young men in white vests from the Old Blues' Football Club, which has been furnishing them for seven years to the Ball, did duty as a Prætorian Guard, holding back the revellers with a rope—"*And those behind cried ' Forward ! ', and those in front cried ' Back ! '* " and nobody leapt into the Tiber, but sometimes a dancer would break through the ropes and make an assault on the centre-piece, when a steward would bring him down with a flying tackle, and two more stewards would throw him out. Finally everyone felt that the whole thing had been going on for long enough, and the line broke, the crowd burst through, the temple columns toppled, and all was soon in pieces. " That 's not one of the draperies, chum," said an Australian centurion to one enthusiast. " That 's my skirt you 're tearing."

Everywhere there were stewards. I went to talk to one of them. " Do you get paid for this job ? " I asked. He told me, No ; he and his colleagues were not even allowed to bring partners without buying tickets. " You must get a bit bored," I said. He replied that there was always plenty to do ; the stewards were there to prevent Unseemliness. To our right, a winged three-quarter of a steward floated past, his arms locked about the waist of a young lady whose partner was drunk or lost, their bodies moving languorously to the rhythms of the dance. " Yes, I see what you mean," I said.

In the corridors that circled the arena, and on the stairs that ran from one level to another, here as the night unrolled was the genuine back-stage atmosphere. Here the variously-costumed cast of our spectacle smoothed out smeared make-up, pinned torn lace, smoked, drank, gossiped, condoled over partners lost—a despairing Pantaloon had been to get a beer ; Columbine had escaped before his return, and this Harlequin wore the uniform of the Royal Navy. Devils adjusted their eyebrows, and senators sat on the stairs, producing cigarettes from places where no pockets could possibly be. *Bersaglieri*, hussars, insect-men, eighteenth-century fops, jacobins—" Er, Miss ! " they gesticulated in the bars. " I 'm sorry, old man," they said. " Was that your drink ? " And up in one of the boxes, a young couple in the costume of the 'Twenties who did not dance yawned the hours away, and an abandoned wife sat, stony-faced and silent, in a plush chair.

Who goes to the Ball ? I conducted a one-man experiment in Mass Observation, working my way from one reveller to another in a crowded buffet. There were more young couples than middle-aged, and most of the young men seemed to be students—fledgeling medicos, lawyers and engineers who have made this their big outing of the winter. Of the unmarried girls, five were in secretarial jobs and five were nurses, three were students and one sweet chick replied, " Well, I don't do anything, ackcherly, but stay at home and help Mummy."

Round and round went the grotesque *papier-mâché* figures that John Minton had designed to preside above these Seemly revels. Blue and red, the spotlights criss-crossed among the dancers. Another band came to the rostrum—beautiful ladies in blue with a boogie-beat. In the centre of the dance floor, those who wanted to take the weight off their feet formed a stationary island. A newspaper photographer in a burnous asked me whether I had seen anyone with a black eye. " Miss Gabor 's in California," I said, but he only went as far as the bar. Balloons descended from the ceiling. A young man in a black shirt crooned old Irish lullabies into the ear of a pretty nurse. " My God ! " she said. " I shall miss this when I get to Darjeeling."

Outside, the policemen, the taxis, and the wistful watching men were still there. There were no footprints on my costume, and I had lost my partner to a handsome Colonial with a clove carnation. Dawn does not break at five o'clock, and it was night, black night, when I left the Albert Hall.

JOHN BOWEN.

". . . . one of the less bloodthirsty Roman Emperors."

Miss Beverley Snyder, wearing a beautiful dress of dark green silk, chats with Miss Jennifer Clark. Behind them are two more of her friends with whom she was to have been a débutante last year, Miss Caroline Luscombe and Miss Louise Trevor.

Family Christmas-cards adorn the walls behind these laughing guests who are obviously enjoying this traditional American egg-nog party drink. They are Mrs. Hubert Raphael, Miss Wendy Raphael, Lieutenant R. Byrne and Mrs. Byrne, and Mr. Hubert Raphael.

Miss Lucinda Leveson-Gower with Mr. David Gow.

A NEW YEAR'S DAY EGG-NOG PARTY

Friends of Miss Beverley Snyder are delighted to see her out and about again, after her long sojourn in hospital following the near-tragedy last year when she was severely burned when she stood too near a fire and her dressing-gown caught alight. The accident occurred a few days before her coming-out party and a week before she was to be presented at Court. Now that she is fit again, her father, well-known American businessman Mr. Norman G. Snyder, and mother decided to start 1954 well for her by holding their annual New Year's Day egg-nog party—an American tradition—in her name, at their delightful home in Phillimore Place. Many of the guests were last year's débutante friends of Miss Snyder, but her own coming-out party has only been postponed, after all, and she has all the pleasure of her first "season" ahead of her.

Photographed by Chris Ware.

Mr. Norman G. Snyder with his daughter.

Fifteen-year-old Bruce Snyder poses proudly beside his mother and sister. It was Bruce who rescued Miss Snyder when her dressing-gown caught fire last year.

This threesome, members of London's younger set, were delighted with the novelty of the egg-nog party: Miss Annette Lawrence, Miss Jane Houston-Boswell and Miss Jill Tinsley.

ROYAL VISITORS TO "SPACE." Ex-King Peter of Yugoslavia and his son Prince Alexander are about to enter a "space machine" at the Schoolboys' Exhibition at the Horticultural Hall.

WINTER SPORTS. Princess Marijke, the youngest of the four Princesses of the Dutch Royal family, enjoys a ride on a toboggan at Grindelwald, where the family have been spending a holiday.

WEDDING. Yeomen Warders and U.S. Marines formed a guard of honour at the marriage of the former Miss Rosemary Reece and Corporal Raymond Schubert in the Chapel of the Tower.

BURMESE INDEPENDENCE DAY. A reception was held at the Embassy for Burmese nationals in connection with the country's Independence Day. *Left* Mrs. Myo Than, and *right* Mrs. Sao Boonwaat, wife of the Chargé d'Affaires.

CHRISTENING. Viscountess Melgund with her infant son after his christening at St. James's, Spanish Place Lady Melgund was formerly Lady Caroline Child-Villiers, daughter of the Earl of Jersey.

Notes and Pictures from

Our Social Diary

FOR some years past I have spent Christmas staying with friends in Berkshire, where each year the nostalgic and delightful ritual of early-morning stockings for the children, church at eleven, and the traditional lunch of turkey and plum-pudding, followed by presents off the tree, is observed with faithful formality. On Boxing Day we—those of us, that is, who are adults—invariably go to Kempton races. This very popular meeting is attended by people from all parts of the country, the chief attraction being the King George VI. Steeplechase. The race was won this year by Lady Orde's *Galloway Braes*, which gave a faultless display of jumping, and decisively beat the joint-favourite, *Mont Tremblant*, owned by Miss Dorothy Paget. Amongst the enormous crowd I saw the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk with the Hon. William and Mrs. McGowan, Mr. Christopher Soames, and Mr. and Mrs. John Hislop. Lord Willoughby de Broke, Major James Dance, Sir Francis Weatherby, and Major and Mrs. Peter Starkey had come from Warwickshire, whilst visitors from Hertfordshire included Mr. and Mrs. Edward Loyd with Major Peter Loyd and Miss Lavinia Keppel, who were staying with them. Lord and Lady Pender had come down from London with their two sons, and their daughter the Hon. Mrs. Robin Dent, and also enjoying the afternoon's programme were Brigadier and Mrs. Roger Peake.

On New Year's Eve I went to the Limelight Ball which was held at the Savoy in aid of the Royal Society for the Blind. Guests were received in the River Room by Lady Pulbrook, chairman, whose excellent idea this was for everyone to forgather before dinner was served. We then moved into the Lancaster Ballroom, which presented a very festive appearance with multi-coloured balloons suspended from the ceiling and scarlet candles on each table. An extremely good dinner was followed later by a cabaret, for which Mr. Ben Lyon (whose wife and daughter were also present) acted as M.C. Artists included Jack and Daphne Barker, whose song referring to the recent attempt to gain control of the Savoy caused great amusement, not least to Mr. Charles Clore, who was there with his wife.

At midnight the passing of the Old Year was symbolised with the traditional and, I always think, somewhat melancholy figure of a white-bearded gentleman bearing a scythe, and the New Year was brought in by the charming young daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Waites. There is no doubt that everyone enjoyed themselves enormously, and Lady Pulbrook is to be heartily congratulated on her powers of organisation, as I know how hard she worked beforehand to ensure the success of the evening. Lady Ogilvy, with her husband, was kept very busy running the tombola, which did a roaring trade, as there were the most attractive prizes to be won. Amongst those who brought parties were Elizabeth, Countess of Bandon, Sir Patrick Hennessy and Mr. Mark and Lady Elizabeth Longman, whose guests included Moira Shearer and her husband, Mr. Ludovic

"HUNTING" IN RICHMOND PARK. The "Master," Dr. de Lannay, with some of his young followers, who are members of the Wimbledon Pony Club, before the start of a mock hunt.

FANCY DRESS PARTY. Lady Docker, wearing a dress representing every make of Daimler, with her husband, son, and other guests, at the New Year's Eve Ball at the Poole Harbour Yacht Club.

WEDDING. The Hon. Aislinn Morris, elder daughter of Lord Morris and of Mrs. Cyril Salmon, with her bridegroom, Lieutenant Angus J. C. Hildyard, R.A., after their marriage at St. James's, Spanish Place.

ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER. The former Miss Sigrid Musker, elder daughter of Sir John and Lady Musker, married Mr. Brian Gething, son of the late Lieut.-Colonel B. W. E. and Lady Donatia Gething.

LIMELIGHT BALL. The ball was held on New Year's Eve at the Savoy Hotel in aid of the Royal Society for the Blind. Mr. Gerard Dent and Miss Catherine Spencer.

Kennedy. Lady Pulbrook also had a large party, amongst whom were Mr. John de Pret-Roose, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Palmer, Mr. and Mrs. Toby Waddington and the Hon. Harry Cubitt, who had been unfortunate in breaking his collar-bone whilst hunting with the Quorn. I also saw Mr. Erland and Lady Ursula d'Abo, and young people included Miss Caroline Clive, Miss Philippa King, Miss Catherine Spencer, Mr. Ian Cameron, Mr. Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie and Mr. Michael Scott, who was shortly off to Germany to join his battalion of the Scots Guards.

I hear from Madrid that the news of the engagement between Princess Marie Louise of Bulgaria and M. Jack Roosmale Nepven (a Dutchman by birth) has been received with delight by the "younger set," with whom the young couple are extremely popular. It is not yet settled where H.R.H. and her fiancé are to make their future home; at present the Princess lives with her mother, ex-Queen Ionna, and her brother, ex-King Simeon, in a villa in Madrid. In addition to being a superb linguist, Princess Marie Louise has studied literature and philosophy at Madrid University, and has also received her Red Cross nursing diploma, which was awarded personally by General Franco.

Sprays of white lilac and Madonna lilies formed the beautiful floral decorations at St. Margaret's, Westminster, for the marriage of Miss Sigrid Musker, elder daughter of Sir John and Lady Musker, and Mr. Brian Gething, son of the late Lieut.-Colonel B. W. E. and Lady Donatia Gething. The bride looked very lovely in a dress of white lace with a rose design, and embroidered with gold thread, the very full skirt falling in folds at the back to form a slight train. Her tulle veil was surmounted by a diamond tiara, and she carried a bouquet of white orchids and hyacinths. The four grown-up bridesmaids were Miss Penelope Musker, Miss Mariette Hornby, Miss Judy Ranger and the Hon. Mary Ann Gretton. The two child bridesmaids were the Hon. Susan Verney and the Hon. Elizabeth Gretton. They all wore dresses of white tulle with scarlet sashes and matching wreaths of velvet berries, and carried Victorian posies of lily-of-the-valley. Two young pages, the Hon. Anthony Gretton and Michael Bowlby, looked enchanting in naval uniform—a reminder that the bridegroom had previously served with the Royal Navy. Mr. Richard Gaskell was best man. At Claridge's, where the reception was held, we were welcomed by Sir John and Lady Musker (the latter wearing a dress of deep hyacinth-blue silk, and a pale lilac velvet hat) and Maud, Countess Fitzwilliam, the bridegroom's grandmother. Other relatives of the bridegroom present included Earl Fitzwilliam and the Countess of Wharncliffe. I thought Mrs. Jean Garland was one of the most beautiful women there, and I also thought the Duchess of Argyll looked very lovely in a hat of pale-blue osprey feathers. I was delighted to see Mrs. Berkeley Stafford looking so well after her recent illness, and also Mr. Michael Menzies, who was over here on a brief visit from South Africa, where he now lives with his wife, the former Miss Kay Stammers. Among the numerous guests I saw the Duke of Marlborough, Lady Tryon, Lord and Lady Willoughby de Broke, and Lady Gretton.

There is to be a masked ball at Hutchinson House on January 27th in aid of the National Association of Mixed Clubs and Girls' Clubs. There are to be two prizes, one for the most original domino worn and the other for the most beautiful domino. Lady Bridget Clark is chairman, and tickets may be obtained from Lady Beddoe-Rees, at 140, Park Lane, W.1.

AT THE THEATRE with J. C. TREWIN

From Hollywood to Hammersmith

The Big Knife

(*Duke of York's*)

THERE are farces during which we long for a cooling moment of seriousness. There are also serious plays during which we yearn for a custard-pie. Clifford Odets is a reputable dramatist; but in *The Big Knife* he talks so much, so anxiously, so verbosely, that attention faints. We have the makings here of a sturdy melodrama. Alas, Odets has muffled and wadded the play in dialogue that, for London ears, needs stern cutting—the use of the big knife. "Isn't it time," exclaims the protagonist, "that we learned to bear the strains of life in silence?" Agreed.

An actor of (so we are told) potential greatness is chained to Hollywood and Beverly Hills. (There 's gold in them thar Hills.) He is blackmailed and menaced, unsure in both his career and his domestic life: his wife, long-suffering, has suffered almost too long. Now he finds escape and re-birth uncommonly hard. Odets has not persuaded some of us that the man is worth a bag of marbles. Sam Wanamaker, so apt at expressing nervous tension, works like a fury for part and author, and he has the advantage of being an American.

Some of the others in the cast have to stay on the outside looking in; but I find Renée Asherson's performance moving. The wife is the truest character; and for Miss Asherson's emotional veracity we forgive any trouble with accent or idiom. Meier Tzelniker impresses in his bubble-pipe manner as a little agent who regrets his sycophancy; George Coulouris has a good slink; Diane Cilento provides a Strumpet Voluntary as one of the young women about Beverly Hills; and we regret that Heather Stannard's talent is wasted yet again.

Who else? Frederick Valk. He represents the Bigger Business, and Odets has not spared him. Valk is a governing actor, a cold mountain-face. Nevertheless, he has frequently been a strain on the ear: the prose of Marcus Hoff in this piece suffers just as the poetry of Othello did years ago. I am sorry not to like the play more, but there it is: it has not taken kindly to its Atlantic crossing.

At the Lyric

(*Lyric, Hammersmith*)

More Intimacy at Eight

(*New Lindsey*)

I WAS brought up on one of the windiest corners of the English coast, where visitors talked of "a fearful gale" and the bored locals of "a bit of a breeze." Hermione Baddeley, in revue, has been at gale-force for so long that she cannot realise how she must affect playgoers who meet her for the first time. They lash themselves down and maybe grip the seat before them in their teeth. Personally, being gale-trained, I like the Baddeley surge. She is enjoyably herself in the new Lyric revue. Alan Melville has found the right material for her, especially in the number where a television-bemused housewife, forced to spend her evenings in the twilight, and able only to cope with the "house affairs" during a technical hitch, asks in pathetic bewilderment why in the world she must be sitting there. It is a comment on our time, and a Baddeley creation. Dora Bryan (the revue's gentler breeze) uses her special slack-water driblet of a voice enchantingly in such a sketch as *Miss Manderson*. The name means nothing; let me say merely that Miss M., on a psychiatrist's couch, is explaining that she has always had a curious urge to push people over. Throughout life bodies seem to have whirled around her (there was that day on Beachy Head, remember?). The psychiatrist has never had such a case as this, and we are well aware that he never will again.

Several other clever people join in the revue that William Chappell has directed. (It is Melville's mostly, with one or two good Paul Dehn numbers.) Technically, it is more polished than the latest New Lindsey skirmish. But again the Lindsey offers a skirmish of wit. The authors—the Myers-Grahame-Climie team—know their way about; and I suggest a visit to Palace Gardens Terrace for the sake of Joan Sims' *femme fatale* station announcer, Ronnie Stevens' barber of Charing Cross Road (neo-Rossini), Digby Wolfe's last, surviving B.B.C. announcer who fights to the end, and somebody's nice remark, "You are nearer to cod in Grimsby than anywhere else on earth." And I implore those who cannot regard Mr. Eliot the dramatist with true reverence to observe the Lindsey's bedroom farce in the new disguised-verse manner.

One or two numbers might be cut—*What of the Knights?* for example—but, on the whole, this is as brisk an intimate revue as we have had in a club theatre, and much of it ought to be transferable. I would not have lost Miss Sims as "Woking" oozed seductively from her lips.

STRATFORD BOY

Novelists are still at work on Shakespeare. Gerald Bullett, in *The Alderman's Son* (Collins; 12s. 6d.), has concentrated upon the early days at Stratford. I read the book eagerly—though guiltily, for I was poaching on Miss Stern—but I had to admit that the title was the best thing: that, and one of the Grammar School scenes where we find the model for Hugh Evans. Young Will Shaxper comes out likeably, the prose is quiet and civilised, and Mr. Bullett has not exaggerated the "echo" trick—"Your exquisite reason, dear child," and so forth. But the true boy Shakespeare remains elusive; it will take a master to raise him.

Down Came a Blackbird

(*Savoy*)

NOWADAYS we so seldom find an author ready to take a call, that we stared at Peter Blackmore as eagerly as at some rare treasure long buried. Not that he had any buried look; rather, he seemed as cheerful and as bewildered as any dramatist might who was taking a call after the house-lights had gone up. He was able to speak, though he would agree that what he said was not oratory, and that his comedy was much better.

I don't say that it is in any sense a major comedy. But it can soothe, and coax. Mr. Blackmore understands the trick of the line, unremarkable on the page, that will certainly please an audience: he has kept his persiflage going. We are in Egypt, and a leading character is an Egyptologist—which is presumably why I was thinking of tombs. Still, you need not fear that the evening will be spent deciphering papyri, or in discussing a "dig." It is wholly concerned with the nose of the Egyptologist's secretary. Nursery-rhyme-blackbird-nose. See! If you are unsure at first, and wonder who or what pecked the nose off, I must explain that the blackbird here is a plastic surgeon. Somebody, unnamed, in London alters the shape of Betty Paul's nose and so alters the shape of her life.

It had been almost a Cyrano-nose: not an adornment for any girl; undeniably bad luck for a girl in love with her employer. But nobody with the vaguest experience of the theatre can imagine for half a second that Miss Paul will be permitted to look like that all night—and in the Christmas holidays, too! After the interval the piece develops as a Cinderella story should develop; we see the duckling-into-swan act. It is Mr. Blackmore's special Transformation Scene, and the dramatist, towards the end of his play, has the wit to confound some too-sanguine prophets. I leave it to you to find the truth. A comedy can be a neat and likeable affair without pretending to be a masterpiece; and those are the words for the latest Cinderella. Betty Paul employs her charm and technique far more profitably, I feel, than in the past—the performance, indeed, is exceptionally adroit—and John Loder (Egyptologist), Hazel Penwarden (who might have strayed in from *Patience*), and Viola Keats (viper-in-the-bosom) are as Mr. Blackmore must have wished.

Cinderella

(*Palladium*)

IT is the happiest panto-subject, and this is as happy a version as I remember. Richard Hearne in the bowels of a washing-machine, Adèle Dixon and Julie Andrews to end rightly as Prince and Princess, Max Bygraves to chant "Bighead!"—here they all are, and Val Parnell has never had a spectacle more satisfying than the magical creation of coach and gown.

Specially drawn for "THE SKETCH" by Anton.

"BED IS OBVIOUSLY THE PLACE FOR YOU, MISS WATSON."

In the foreground of this group are Miss Joan Davies and Mr. and Mrs. M. Kennedy. In the background on the right are Mr. and Mrs. A. Woodhouse ; Mr. Woodhouse is a former Treasurer of the Hallé Club and a well-known Manchester chartered accountant.

Mr. Leonard F. Behrens, Chairman of the Hallé Concerts Society, dancing with Mrs. Behrens.

The Hallé Club holds a New Year Ball

At the New Year Ball held by the Hallé Club in conjunction with the Hallé Concerts Society in the Free Trade Hall in Manchester on January 1st, Sir John Barbirolli, Guest of Honour, entered wholeheartedly into the spirit of the occasion. Conducting the Hallé Orchestra for two sessions of Viennese waltzes and other popular dances, he amused the guests by placing a paper hat on his head. During the evening he was presented with a pair of wall chandeliers to commemorate his ten years with the Orchestra. Modern dance music was provided by Bert Hornby and his orchestra, and the 1100 guests were entertained by some excellent displays of national dancing by groups of traditionally costumed Ukrainian and Scottish dancers.

Photographed for "THE SKETCH" by Deryck Whittaker, Manchester.

Foursome who watched the national dancing together are Mr. J. Tyson, Mrs. W. A. Robinson, Mr. W. A. Robinson and Miss E. Hessey.

There were several displays of national dancing and this picture shows some of the Ukrainian dancers in their colourful costumes.

Mr. Michael Kennedy, the music critic, and Mrs. Kennedy.

Mr. John Aldridge, the film critic, and Mrs. Aldridge.

Mr. B. H. Flowers, seen dancing with Mrs. Flowers.

Miss M. Lea Axon, the joint-Secretary of the Hallé Club, with the Club's Chairman, Mr. W. A. Robinson.

The Organising Secretary of the Ball Committee (Miss Hessey) and the Club's Publicity Officer discuss the success of the evening.

Mr. C. Yates-Lloyd, Treasurer of the Hallé Club, with Mr. W. A. Robinson, Chairman, and Mr. I. Neilson, vice-Chairman.

Mr. C. Yates-Lloyd discusses the evening's programme with Sir John Barbirolli, Guest of Honour.

George, Viscount Villiers, son and heir of the Earl of Jersey.

Lady Isabella Child-Villiers, daughter of the Earl of Jersey.

Michael Petrovitch, who is a nephew of Prince Chula of Siam.

Robert Hughes, son of Richard Hughes.

Clive Gibson, son of Patrick Gibson.

Sarah, daughter of Malcolm Baker-Smith.

A delightful study of Charlotte, the young daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Lane, of Ashton Wold, Oundle, Peterborough. Mrs. Lane is a sister of Baron Rothschild.

The Art of

EDWARD WOLFE

It is fitting that the exhibition of work by Edward Wolfe, which opened yesterday (January 12th) at the Mayor Gallery, 14, Brook Street, W.1, should consist almost entirely of paintings and drawings of children. For Mr. Wolfe, who came to England from Johannesburg more than thirty years ago, is decidedly one of the young in heart. His work has a quality of freshness and vivacity which is not only distinctive but is frequently unkind to other paintings shown in close proximity, giving them a sort of sameness which would not normally be apparent. This is a quality he shares with Matthew Smith and Duncan Grant, and together they form a trilogy of artists whose intellectual and emotional work brought them to the fore between the two wars.

Almost from his arrival in this country as a very young man, his obvious promise was publicly acknowledged. He was only sixteen when he became a *protégé* of the then highly influential Roger Fry, at his Omega Workshops, where many coming artists were developing under his expert guidance. Roger Fry regarded the young man as a real "discovery" and published some of his drawings in the *Burlington Magazine*. At eighteen, he was exhibiting with the

Left: ISCHIA, IN THE BAY OF NAPLES, which is in the collection of the Earl of Jersey. *Right:* PORT MEIRION, IN NORTH WALES, which looks so much like an Italian village; it was built about thirty years ago by architect Clough Williams Ellis and certainly proves his theory that such hilly landscapes are ideally suited to the Italian-influenced architectural style.

This nude study was included in Mr. Wolfe's exhibition of various aspects of his work at the O'Hana Gallery last May.

THE FRENCH CLOCK, in the collection of the Earl of Jersey, is a fine example of still-life by the artist.

ZOHRA, one of the striking studies of natives which Edward Wolfe painted during his stay in Fez, in Morocco, in 1932.

Edward Wolfe

London Group, to which he has now belonged for more than thirty years, and, right from the first, collectors were quick to buy his pictures.

They were quite unique, even startling, to English observers with eyes used to the delicate blues and greys and greens of their own misty islands, for Edward Wolfe paints with the sun in his brush. Not the friendly, mellow sun of these islands, but the fierce, red-hot blaze which is Africa's own. He brings to his work the vivid colour and warmth and vigour which were the essence of his boyhood spent among the glaring reds and yellows and purples of his native country. Even the portraits he makes in his studio, and his lovely still-life and flower-pieces, have this same glowing effect.

His first few years in England gave him a great love of this, his home from home, but in the years that followed, he was away seeking out the sun, painting in Italy, Spain, South Africa, Mexico and the country where perhaps his best work has been done, Morocco. Every so often he would return to London and take a studio, with all the appearances of "settling down," and for a while his pictures would smoulder and blaze on some gallery wall—but soon, the call of the sun would be too strong and off he would go again. At the moment he is here, and we are taking advantage of it, aware of our good fortune—and quietly confident that his present exhibition can only add to the large mass of his admirers in this country.

Another of the excellent nude studies which were shown in Mr. Wolfe's London exhibition in May of last year, in which so many of his superb Moroccan paintings appeared.

"Please Forward": by Joyce Dennys.

Henrietta Comes Home

MY DEAR ROBERT,

We are home again!

As we approached our natal shores I began to cry. "Why are you crying, Henrietta?" said Charles in the patient voice he keeps for these occasions.

"It is The White Cliffs of Dover, Charles."

"Only it happens to be Southampton Docks, and you cried when you saw the Statue of Liberty."

"I know."

It rained steadily during our journey home in the train. Charles and I sat breathing ecstatically on the glass of the carriage windows, wiping off the steam with our handkerchiefs, which soon turned a sullen, dark-grey colour, and exclaiming with delight as each cow, each sheep, each funny-shaped little field and modest farm came in sight. When the train rattled into the West Country and we saw the good red plough-land again we could hardly contain our excitement.

"I hate that red mud," said the man in the corner, whose shin I had excitedly and accidentally kicked a few moments before. "As for those red cliffs you all make such a fuss about—ugh!" He shuddered and closed his eyes. "Red cliffs—green seas—blue sky—yellow gorse—it makes me feel quite ill."

"I take it you are from the Eastern Counties," said Charles kindly.

Faith . . . rose from behind the sofa.

When we got out of the train Mr. Burke, the Station Master, Bill Tavener, the Porter, and Bert Adams, the Ticket Collector, all gave us a warm welcome, but apart from them and Sydney with his taxi, some hens in a crate, and a large package of flowering shrubs done up in sacking and addressed to Colonel Simpkins, the station was empty.

"I did think Lady B. at least might have come to meet us," said Charles.

"Perhaps she has her bronchitis, Charles," I said.

"Perhaps," said Charles.

When we got to our garden gate we asked Sydney to stop. "You see," said Charles rather sheepishly, "all these years we've been imagining ourselves walking up the drive."

"Of course," said Sydney, who is an understanding boy. "I'll come up with the luggage in ten minutes," and he clambered back into his taxi.

"A happy month, Henrietta," said Charles.

The little house stood above us with its air of modest distinction which we have always found so charming, and a feather of blue smoke curled out of the drawing-room chimney. "Good old Evensong," said Charles, "she's remembered to light the fire, anyway."

It was coming on for dimpsy and a very still evening. A thrush was singing in the ash tree and as we stood there a golden leaf fluttered slowly down into my outstretched hand. "A Happy Month, Henrietta," said Charles, and kissed me.

"All our months will be happy now, Charles."

There was a lot of groundsel among the Kaffir Lilies, and I immediately began to pull it up. Groundsel is my favourite weed, for it comes sweetly out of the ground, unlike Bindweed, which, as everybody knows, has its roots in Australia, breaks under the hand and engenders feelings of frustration and rage. I was thus happily employed, and Charles, with a pen-knife, was digging clover out of the camomile lawn when a plaintive toot from the gate reminded us of poor Sydney and our luggage, so we waved to him to come up and made for the house.

The front door was unlocked, as all front doors should be, so Charles put his key back into his pocket and we walked in. The first thing I noticed about the inside of our house was a bunch of mixed late autumn flowers in the hall which I knew at once had been arranged by Faith.

As we opened the drawing-room door a well-remembered voice said, "Welcome Home, Charles! Welcome Home, Henrietta!", and we were enfolded in Lady B's warm and fragrant bosom.

"Oh, Lady B! Dear Lady B!"

"My dears, my dears—I can hardly believe it!"

"How good you smell!"

"I hope so, Henrietta, for it is now my only extravagance."

"How is your bronchitis?"

"So-so. I have been very much afraid of dying without Charles to see me across the road."

"I hope to keep you lingering for years," said Charles, kissing Lady B. with violence.

Suddenly, with a wild shriek, Faith, lovelier than ever, rose from behind the sofa like Venus rising from the foam. The Conductor, brandishing a bottle, sprang from behind a chair, Colonel and Mrs. Simpkins from behind one curtain and Mrs. Savernack and the Admiral from behind another. Evensong came rushing from the kitchen, uttered a piercing cry and threw her apron over her head. We were home.

"Just look at Charles—he's better-looking than ever!"

"Faith, you've grown a bun!"

"I know, darling. Isn't it awful?"

"Henrietta, you've aged."

"I know, Mrs. Savernack. Isn't it frightful?"

"Mrs. Whinebite tried to come but we told her it was to-morrow."

"Henrietta, what a nice blouse! Do you call it a shirtwaist?"

"I suppose she's come back as American as American can be. Has she, Charles?"

"Apart from calling the dustbin the ash-can, I would say she was unscathed."

"Did you like America?"

"You bet! If we didn't live here, we'd like to live there."

"Some new people have bought The Grange. They are called Thirza and Gregory Hopkinson—they're rolling."

"We thought you were never going to get here. All that necking at the bottom of the drive—well, really!"

"And then Henrietta started weeding, if you please!"

"Pop!"

"Isn't it a heavenly noise?"

"Golden bubbles winking at the brim."

Lady B. was hoisted from behind by the Conductor.

Lady B, seen struggling to get up on to a chair, was hoisted from behind by the Conductor. "Ladies and Gentlemen," she said, spilling a little champagne on the Conductor as though he were a battleship being launched, "To Charles and Henrietta—Welcome Home!"

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend,

HENRIETTA.

Specially photographed for "THE SKETCH" by Eric Coop.

Diplomatic Hostesses: Mme. René Massigli

After nearly ten years in this country, the charming and talented wife of the French Ambassador is easily the best known of London's diplomatic hostesses. Since her husband is the doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, she is also certainly the busiest, for, where others might be forgiven for missing a reception which does not closely concern them, the doyen and his wife must attend every diplomatic function. But the life holds no difficulties for Mme. Massigli, whose father was a well-known Swiss diplomat and whose brother is now a Chancellor at the Swiss Embassy in New York. Her English is faultless and she is an animated and flatteringly attentive conversationalist. For our portrait, Mme. Massigli wore the gown especially designed for her by Dior for the State Banquet in London on June 3rd of last year.

Classical selections from the repertoire. Joan Sims with more gems from Handel's *Messiah*.

Hail Parnassus! Geoffrey Hibbert and Eunice Gayson in the opening chorus of an intellectual concert party.

More Intimacy at Eight

Bankrupt B.B.C. Digby Wolfe as Stuart Hibberd when Portland Place has become just another name for Tobacco Road.

Mr. Disraeli has just bought the Suez Canal and the Queen will open the bazaars. Geoffrey Hibbert and Dilys Lay.

" All round Europe in a Chara." Joan Sims, Dilys Lay, Ronnie Stevens and Geoffrey Hibbert.

Probably the wittiest revue in London is now running at the New Lindsey Theatre Club amid the austerities of Notting Hill Gate. The targets are drawn from literature, politics, the stage and the cinema. Literary naval officers make a warm living by writing about the cold, cruel sea. Another of the wicked ladies of the Bible turns virtuous and all-American when Jezebel is the subject of the latest Hollywood film. " A cold supper you have of it," says the char in the Eliot parody, echoing the Magi. An English emigrant to the States is disturbed by a new colour bar. The last war is revived in a nostalgic pastiche. And Ronnie Stevens as a spiv barber and Joan Sims as a thwarted station-announcer both stop the show.

Photographed by Houston Rogers.

Eleanor Fazan as Suzanne Lenglen gives a love set a new meaning.

Wish you were here. Wicked Muscles Legree and poor Eliza in a Siamese holiday camp.

" Now try a new cut, not quite a crew cut." Ronnie Stevens as Rossini's barber in the Charing Cross Road.

TALKING OF TELEVISION: by CYRIL BUTCHER

Misunderstanding and a Miracle

WHETHER or not Terence Rattigan has written a classic tragedy in *The Deep Blue Sea* will, of course, be decided only by the traditional test of time. It may well be that this play will end up in the "great" category of British dramatic literature; for it is beautifully conceived and its impact on present-day audiences is profound. Profound and even somewhat shattering; for this is not a happy play, I must warn you. And the intimate medium of television (it is being done on January 17th and 21st) will tend to heighten the poignancy of this disturbing tragedy.

Mr. Rattigan introduces his heroine in the most macabre way: lying unconscious in front of an unlit gas-fire, having tried to commit suicide. She is revived and gradually the wretched story of her reasons for this act comes to light.

Hester Collyer has run away from her husband—a brilliant man as far as his profession, the law, goes, but uninspiring as a spouse—and is living with Freddie Page, one of those ex-R.A.F., bewildered misfits whom the receding tide of war left stranded on the shore of civil life. For Freddie, the Battle of Britain was not only his finest hour, but practically his last. Now he finds himself caught in a liaison which cannot be regularised (due to Sir William Collyer's refusal to divorce Hester), his nerve as a test-pilot gone, and with a taste for whisky and no job.

As for Hester, she has thrown up security, comfort and respectability to be with the man whom she loves as if he were her own being. Now she finds that all her dreams and sacrifices have been in vain. Freddie does not love her. There is nothing left to live for; so she condemns herself to death for having loved unwisely, not well enough and too much.

This theme of unrequited passion is always a strong one, for there are few hearts in which it cannot find an echo. Mr. Rattigan would have been quite justified to make us sorry for Hester, feel how beastly everyone was being to her, and leave it at that. But he has dared to show the other side of the picture—Freddie's side—and in doing so has created a significant human document.

For Freddie is one of those men who inspire more love from others than they are capable of returning. It is not their fault. Freddie did not ask Hester to fall in love with him, he did not ask that she should sacrifice everything to be with him, and he is not capable of playing the Romeo to her Juliet every minute of the day. Hester's love is a tyranny, always putting him in the wrong by making demands upon his which it cannot fulfil. It is this that has driven him to drink and nearer and nearer the gutter. There is Freddie's tragedy; a theme which will also have an echo in many hearts.

IN *The Flowering Thorn*, a new play by Denis Constanduros which you will be able to see on January 19th, television takes us to a remote mountain village "somewhere in Wales." Here the Fear of the Lord burns as fiercely in the breasts of the inhabitants as does resentment of any attempt to interfere with the long-established order of things. Tinpandy has a mass of old legends which are told and retold down the years. One of them concerns the miraculous quenching of a forest fire and the sudden appearance of a flowering thorn. Now an atomic research station has been built on this very spot and trouble is a-brewing.

Meanwhile the vicar, Edwin Meredith and his wife, Dulcie, are in no end of a pother about the non-arrival of the joint for the lunch they are about to give the local bishop, who is to give the opening ceremony of the atom plant his episcopal blessing. Suddenly a miracle happens and the Merediths find their store-cupboard filled with enough lamb chops to feed not only the bishop, but the entire population of Tinpandy. The resulting indigestion from which everyone suffers the following day leads Mr. Constanduros to appear a little doubtful in his own mind whether miracles are an unmixed blessing.

THERE has recently begun a perceptible drift towards television by some of the cinema's leading figures. I am not only thinking of the stars, but also of producers and technicians. The other day Paul Rotha, who has for long been one of the aces of the documentary film, gave a Press conference to mark his assumption of the headship of television's Documentary Department. He carried off the occasion with fine aplomb and, though he did not make any startling revelations, he talked interestingly about his future plans (to which I shall refer as they mature). Now, while welcoming Mr. Rotha to our television ranks as a first-rate man for the job, I must utter a word of caution. He said in his talk that *more and more use would be made of film sequences in future television documentary programmes.*

Think again, please, Mr. Rotha. This is television, not the cinema. Films should only be used as subsidiaries to live presentation; otherwise the whole point of the newest of the media is lost. I'm serious, Mr. Rotha; please think again.

The Tribulations of Tanya

By Anna Zinkeisen and Laurel Pascal

It's very nice to get a parcel
From Lady Inverglossing's Castle,
But what a shock for young Miss Travis
To find she's got a ten-pound haggis!

CATEGORICALLY SPEAKING . . .

Good

Amahl and the Night Visitors, a delightful little Christmas opera by Gian Carlo Menotti, based on the story of the Three Kings. Menotti's music, which has now developed a firm idiom of its own, set the key of simplicity and charm which distinguishes the piece. Christian Simpson is to be congratulated on his excellent casting and his delicate production, which evoked a charming performance in the name-part by Charles Vignoles, and a well-sung characterisation as Amahl's mother by Gladys Whitred.

Follow the Plough, by R. F. Delderfield. Following it gave me much pleasure, gave Leslie Dwyer and Maureen Pryor excellently taken acting opportunities, and gave some live chickens in the studio a square meal.

The Teckman Biography, the latest Saturday night serial, by Francis Durbridge, got off to a good start. There was a martyred look in Patrick Barr's eyes, which betokened a misunderstood hero promising to have a devil of a time of it for the next five instalments.

Photographed by Baron.

Entertainingly Lovely

Lovely Patricia Cutts is back again to entertain us in the popular T.V. parlour game, *Down You Go.* As Deborah in Alex Atkinson's play, *The Four Winds,* in which she previously appeared at the Phœnix Theatre during the play's London run, she has been touring Germany with the rest of the company for Combined Services Entertainment. Miss Cutts trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and spent four years with various repertory companies throughout England, but her film career goes back further than that ; she played in her first film at the age of six—and had her first starring rôle opposite Robert Montgomery in *Your Witness.*

We Take Off Our Hat To . . .

. . . A Younger Generation in the Theatre

Ring in the New! Three young ladies and one young man in three revues and a musical comedy! Two from the "legitimate" stage, one from ballet, and one who climbed from the first the ladder of pantomime and revue! Two from the Commonwealth and two from Great Britain! All four are to be seen this month in London. All four have made a good start. There is some way ahead to go, but in another year?—two years?—five? Who knows? Good luck and Bon Voyage!

JOAN SIMS was a stationmaster's daughter at Laindon, in Essex. As a child she liked dressing-up and used to collect old clothes from the passengers. She started acting at a youth centre, won a scholarship to R.A.D.A. and graduated to a repertory company at Chorlton-cum-Hardy. There followed jobs as a chorus girl and in pantomime, in club revue and so to *High Spirits* in the West End. You can see her this month stopping the show in *More Intimacy at Eight* at the New Lindsey, or in the film *Trouble in Store* at your local cinema.

NOEL DYSON left R.A.D.A. in 1938, but during the war she served as a nurse, and her career in the theatre did not properly begin until 1945, when she went to the Oxford Playhouse. West End audiences were to see her in Terence Rattigan's *Playbill*, at the Arts, and with the Old Vic last season in *An Italian Straw Hat*. Then, last summer, she was asked to join the cast of an intimate review at the New Watergate Theatre, and discovered that she loved it. At present, she may be seen at the same theatre in *Oddly Enough*, hymning the history of the Dirtiest Canal in Venice.

JOAN GADSDON was born in Australia twenty-five years ago, and began her career as a dancer with an Australian ballet company. She has danced in Germany (the American Zone), in France with the de Basil Company, in Spain, and in cabaret in India, where she was recruited to work in an Indian film—"I didn't have any lines in it," she says. "I haven't even been allowed to utter *in English* until this last year because of my Australian accent." Now Miss Gadsdon is uttering in *The Boy Friend*, the "Twenties" musical comedy which opens to-morrow at Wyndham's Theatre.

LEO CICERI is a Canadian who threw up a career in commerce to come to England and join the Old Vic School. He worked hard, lost his Canadian accent, and graduated to the repertory company at Salisbury. Thence to Stratford for two years—small parts and understudies until Richard Wordsworth fell ill and Leo played Antient Pistol. This led to his first West End engagement, as Aumerle in Sir John Gielgud's production of *Richard II*. So to *The Private Life of Helen* and now—his first revue *At the Lyric*, at the Lyric (naturally), Hammersmith.

JOAN SIMS.

NOEL DYSON.

LEO CICERI.

JOAN GADSDON.

Dance, Little Lady

CYD CHARISSE was on her toes at the age of eight, and still is. Texas women are notoriously lovely. So are dancers from the Ballet Russe. Miss Charisse was born in Amarillo, Texas, and has danced for Colonel de Basil. What more could anyone want?

She has been appearing in films since 1942, but is probably best remembered for her dancing with Gene Kelly in *Singing in the Rain*. Her latest, *The Band Wagon*, in which she appears with that pair of debonair veterans, Fred Astaire and Jack Buchanan, opened on January 7th at the Empire, Leicester Square.

AT THE CINEMA with C. A. LEJEUNE

Gold and a Voice

The Grace Moore Story

(*Warner Theatre*)

CUSTOMERS who expect to hear *One Night of Love* used as the theme tune of *The Grace Moore Story* will be disappointed. Not a note of that celebrated work is sung; nor, indeed, is there any hint that Miss Moore ever made a moving picture, let alone became one of the most popular stars in Hollywood musicals. The story covers the first part of her life only, ending with her *début* as Mimi in *La Bohème* at the Metropolitan, on the night when she received twenty-eight curtain calls, one for every year of her life, and another one over.

That was in the 1920's, which makes the picture quite a period piece. Some critics have found it tedious; I, who have a liking for things old-fashioned, thought it gracefully done, and rather charming. It takes the form of a flashback, with the singer alone in her dressing-room, recalling the events that have brought her from a childhood in Tennessee to the crimson plush and golden glories of New York's first opera-house.

"Ever since I was a little girl," she tells us, "I 've had a dream. I 'd got to make that dream come true." The dream was to sing, not just at school and in the choir at church, but in a real theatre; and she made it come true, by sheer, single-hearted determination, by an enterprise that welcomed each new risk, and a determination that wouldn't take no for an answer.

The real Grace Moore was a remarkable person. It was impossible to meet her, even briefly, and not be aware of it. I vividly remember an interview I had with her at Claridge's, when she came over here in the 1930's to sing at Covent Garden. (She was killed in an accident to an airliner just after the war.) She was not beautiful, but seemed intensely *alive*, with a pink-and-gold radiance. Singing meant more to her than just a profession or an occupation; it was almost a religion. She wanted everyone to share in the joy of singing, and was practically interested in all sorts of movements for the musical education of young people.

I think she was a very kind woman, but she was also extremely businesslike. She had a strict rule never to sign her name on any slip of paper thrust at her outside the stage door, only in an autograph album. "You never know what you may be signing away," she said. When I left her hotel room (it was banked with blossoms like the Chelsea Flower Show), she presented me with a single lily on a 5-ft. stem. I appreciated the souvenir, but to this day I remember the nuisance it was to manipulate during the rush hour in the Underground. Carrying it, I felt like Bunthorne in *Patience*.

Grace Moore was almost certainly a better singer than Kathryn Grayson, who plays the name-part in the film. But all the same, somebody has been doing wonders with Miss Grayson's voice since we heard her last. Most of the wobble has been taken out of the high notes and, although it is not a big voice, by Metropolitan standards, it is remarkably sweet and true. It is pleasant, too, to find Walter Abel back (as Miss Moore's father) after nine years' absence from the screen. Such a good and sympathetic actor.

The Million Pound Note

(*Gaumont*)

MARK TWAIN'S celebrated short story, *The Million-Dollar Note*, has been transported to England and extended into ninety-one Technicolor minutes. The sharp little satire on the power of money, and the neat turn of the original, are perhaps rather swamped by the broader comedy of the English version, but the point is still there, the story is still a good story, and the compromise makes a thoroughly likeable film.

"TAKE HEED, FRIEND—DON'T EAT HER MINCE-PIES."

To prove that if a man has enough money, he can get everything he wants without spending a penny of it, two rich and eccentric old brothers in Edwardian London find an American yachtsman, destitute through a series of accidents, and lend him a Bank of England note for a million pounds on condition that he returns it to them intact at the end of a month. He soon finds that he is welcome in all the best houses; can eat to repletion at any restaurant and have a complete wardrobe made by a first-class tailor; can live in the bridal suite of the most exclusive hotel in London, all without paying a penny. What is more, money begets money, and he is presently able to make a fortune on the Stock Exchange and marry a society beauty.

Gregory Peck as the American gives an amiable, slightly bewildered performance, and is surrounded by a galaxy of those familiar character actors so dear to the heart of a British audience: A. E. Matthews as a port-mottled peer of the old school; Joyce Grenfell as a gushing and snobbish hostess; Wilfred Hyde-White and Ronald Squire as the two Dickensian brothers; John Slater borrowed from television to play an enterprising doorman; and Reginald Beckwith possibly stealing the show as a dumb (and I *mean* dumb) circus strong man, who becomes the American's bodyguard and valet.

If Mark Twain's little story was too slight to bear the weight of quite so much noise and physical activity, we are still left with an intelligent piece of work, full of incidental humours, which bowls along as gaily and smoothly as an old-fashioned hansom cab.

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

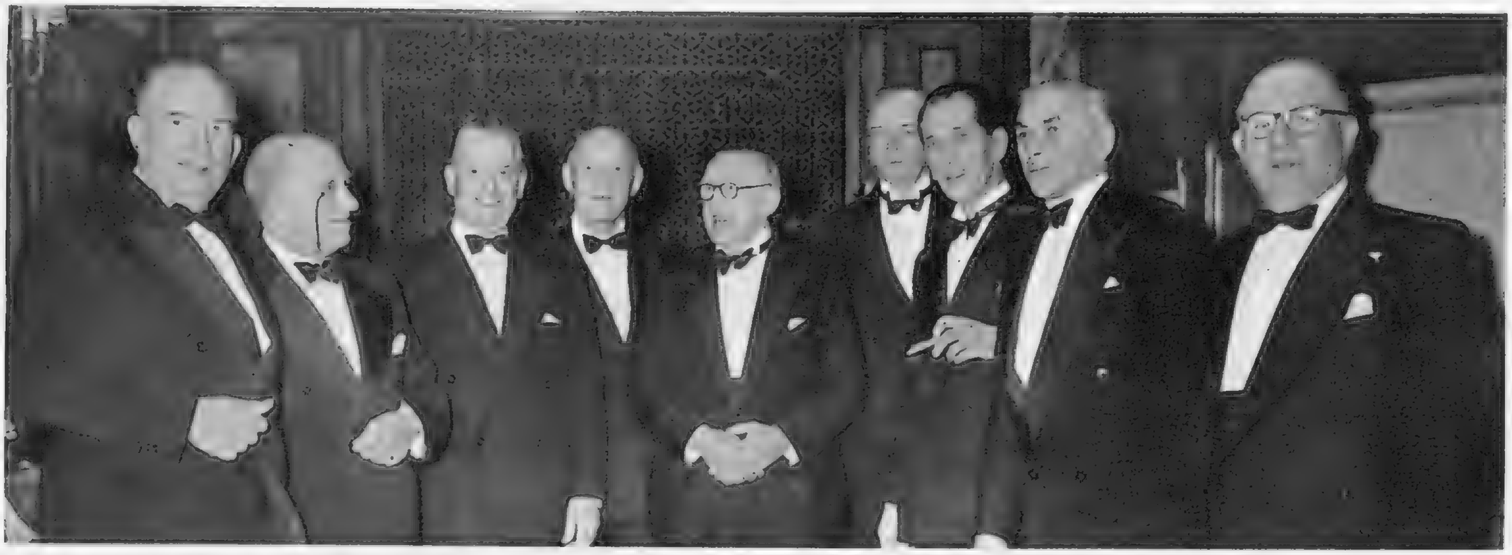
(*Leicester Square*)

ANITA LOOS' slim book about the fortune-hunting blonde, Lorelei Lee (what a stroke of genius that name was!), with her mixture of naivety and shrewdness, vulgarity and genteelism, has a distinctly dated look now, but in its time it was a minor classic.

The screen version comes to us by way of the musical-comedy stage, and from the moment when Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell, sheathed in scarlet silk and sequins, slink in to sing us a number about *Two Little Girls from Little Rock*, we are forced to abandon all hope of subtlety.

The content of the book is expediently reduced to the pithy observation that: "Diamonds are a girl's best friend." (The tune is good too; it sticks.) After that the producers apparently feel free to devote the screen to Miss Monroe's and Miss Russell's personal following, and the script-writers wisely decide not to struggle too hard to create a coherent story out of Lorelei's attempts to marry the son of a millionaire, and wheedle a diamond tiara out of an improbable English knight (Charles Coburn), who sometimes changes inexplicably into a lord, during the course of a voyage from New York to Paris.

Judy Holliday, in *Born Yesterday*, did perhaps rather spoil the market for this kind of dumb blonde, and it may well be that since the 1920's the world has moved on beyond the point at which rich old gentlemen were taken in quite so easily. It could be too, I suppose, that Miss Monroe, in spite of her acknowledged charms, is not, professionally, a tip-top accomplished actress. At all events, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* has little of the astringency of the book the author wrote. I could read the one again with pleasure; see the other again only under persuasion.



Hosts of the evening :—Messieurs Gordon Marsh, John Humphreys, Harold Davy, Harold H. Dean (President), Harry Tinslay, Sydney Creasy, Cyril Ivory, John Mills (Secretary) and Bert Wolfe.

Mr. E. Bishop and Mr. and Mrs. Tinslay.

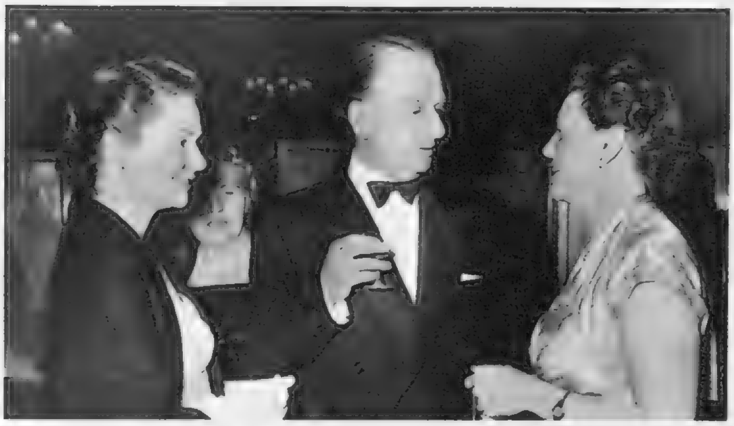
A BUSMEN'S HOLIDAY

The annual dinner of the Society of London Toastmasters was held at the Trocadero on December 28th. Our picture above shows the nine members of the Society who attended the dinner.

The Society numbers only eleven members. Membership, which is governed by the General Council, is a highly-coveted honour.

Members were accompanied by their wives and friends. Guests of the Society were the Right Hon. the Lord Mancroft and Lady Mancroft.

Mr. Harold Dean between Lord and Lady Mancroft.



Miss Patricia Foster, Mr. H. Davy and Mrs. V. Trevor.

Lord and Lady Mancroft with Mr. Gordon Marsh.

Mrs. H. Dean, Miss A. Dixon, Mr. D. Harding and Mrs. V. Trevor.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Mills and Mr. and Mrs. K. Bailey.

MOTORING with WILLIAM HARTLEY

A Product of British Craftsmen

THE Bristol type "403" was first announced last May and is the current production model, although there are later versions of special jobs for competition work. The "403," at a basic price of £2100, is an expensive car; to have tried one for a few days was a great pleasure.

There are several welcome major alterations from the "401" model. First, the engine is of considerably higher power, now giving 100 brake-horse-power at 5000 r.p.m. against only 85 at 4500 of the earlier type. The gear lever is now central through the floor, and the brakes have been improved.

Making one's first run in this Bristol "403" is a satisfying and almost exciting experience, for there is no doubt that from the start the car handles remarkably well. Cornering is first-rate, and I do not think it is so detrimental to tyre pressures as it was on the "401," probably due to the telescopic shock-absorbers and an anti-roll bar incorporated in the front suspension.

Performance on the road is lively, but I would make one criticism. The gear ratio seems to me to be high for use in this country, where sheer maximum speed is not as important or as useful as acceleration. Second gear is so high that the car jibs at taking off in second, even on level ground. Not that it is a hardship to change from first to second: nothing could be easier. And since the car is equipped with a free-wheel on first gear, engagement of that gear is simplicity itself.

But I would like to be able to take off in second gear, and I would like to have a little less gear-changing to do all through the range. Even at around 60 m.p.h., one finds it necessary to change down to third for best acceleration. The petrol consumption of the "403" seems to be around the 24-miles-per-gallon mark, even when one drives hard.

The body is a fine job, well designed and built, with trimming and finish of a high order. Rear seating is very comfortable, although not spacious, and the front individual bucket seats are grand. I like the push-button door handles, fitted flush—though I got my hands very dirty one night when, in pitch darkness, I went out to the car from a brightly-lit party to spend some minutes feeling over the door panel to find the button to press.

The luggage-boot is very spacious and keeps dry and clean. It is opened by pulling a knob hidden behind the folding arm in the rear seat squab. Perhaps it would be easier to stow away one's shopping if it could be opened from outside, but it works well and preserves the clean exterior which is such a point with Bristols.

Inside the car again, the instrument panel of polished walnut is in keeping with the whole car. The instruments work with accuracy, and they are not skimped. There is still room for two large glove boxes. And the air conditioning really does its job, giving a quick warm-up and any variation you may wish.

Yes, the Bristol "403" is a fine car indeed, very comfortable and smooth for gentle use and yet very smart for the faster run. This is the sort of product that British craftsmanship produces so well.

This and That

THE Monte Carlo Rally is one of the greatest of all the classic events. Unless the weather changes from the spring-like afternoon outside my window as I write these notes, drivers should not this year have quite the struggle to get to Monte Carlo as they have had so often in the past. This does not make it much easier to win the Rally, however, but merely makes it less unpleasant.

* * *

Between now and the summer, there will be a number of announcements of new models, if what I hear around the factories is correct. Some of these are particularly interesting, but I do not suggest that any rumours you may hear should make you change your mind about any new car you may be just about to buy. If you do, you will keep putting it off for ever.

* * *

Twice of late I have ridden in post-war cars of recent date that have pinked sufficiently for me to hear it easily. On asking each of the owners, I was informed that they were using premium grade petrol. To pink on this virtually pink-proof spirit is very wrong and ignition must be far too far advanced to permit it. Ignition as advanced as that results in waste of petrol and power; if in doubt, I suggest a check against makers' recommendations. This petrol is really remarkable stuff, you know; far better than anything we could get before the war. What a pity to misuse it.

* * *

So winking direction indicators on cars are now legal. The Ministry have produced the Order, but it seems months since they announced that they proposed to do so. What a time it has taken! It calls forth from me the hope that these winkers will be more reliable than the semaphore-arms that we have had for some time. Far too many times did I come across people driving along with one trafficator arm or other stuck out for mile after mile, leaving me in doubt as to their intentions! I do think it should be made a requirement that any form of traffic indicator should either be visible to the driver or have an illuminated repeater within his vision, so that he is clearly aware that it is functioning when he wants it to and not when he doesn't. So many people rely on these things to warn everyone else on the road, instead of supplementing them with a glance in the mirror and so forth, that they should be made more foolproof and reliable. The mirror is, to me, the greatest safety aid of the lot.

* * *

What is all this fuss about shilling-in-the-slot Parking Meters? Can anyone explain to me how they will solve the parking problem? True, it may mean a fine if you leave your car more than the allotted time, but surely all that will happen is a shuffle round to find another spot, and that only adds to the nuisance.

But how silly it all is! Surely a loan from the Treasury to get the car-parks or multi-storey garages built at once would be better, for the charges would soon pay off the loan or at least make it a worth-while investment. The Ministry of Transport would do well to consult a collection of average but practical motorists. Between them, they would probably have more ideas than all your committees.

"While the party is on, it is wiser to keep your valuables with you than leave them lying about upstairs."

(Extract from official Home Office leaflet on foiling the burglar during the party season.)

DRAWN BY GUS.

Our Fashion Portfolio

by NORAH OWEN

Shorn lamb fur-fabric in various pastel shades makes a warm, short coat for the sports spectator. A wrap-over, it has an enormous collar and deep pockets. By Bickler, price about 17 gns., from Dickins and Jones. Striped stocking-cap, 18s. 6d., gay knitted gloves, £1 5s., from Simpson, Piccadilly.

For Snow and for Sport

This year sales of Winter Sports clothes have been larger than ever before, and even slow-starting falls of snow have failed to daunt the eager crowds in the Sports departments. Many London stores now have professional ski-ing advisers, who have helped to raise the standard of all equipment and ski-wear sold in this country. For those who stay at home, the brilliant colours of the caps, scarves and sweaters, designed for bright, snowy days, will do much to cheer the grey English winter.

Specially photographed for "THE SKETCH" by Denis Hughes-Gilbey.

OUR FASHION PORTFOLIO (continued)

For Snow and for Sport

Left : Stark against the snow, a contrast in black-and-white, well-fitting and clean-lined. The white, proofed-poplin ski-jacket, 9 gns., with an easy waistline, is worn with black, proofed-gaberdine Daks ski-trousers, 11 gns. Black-and-white poplin, peaked Balaclava, 1 gn. Ski-boots, £13 10s., are worn over thick socks, 17s. Black-and-blue businesslike mitts cost £1 3s. 6d. Skis, 14 gns., and ski-sticks, £4 7s. 6d. All come from Simpson, Piccadilly, where Winter Sports Departments for both men and women are well stocked, planned, and have been supervised by professional skiers.

Right : Another store that has made special provision for the beginner is Harrods, Knightsbridge, where Lotte Smith will assist and advise on the buying of Winter Sports clothes and kit. All the family, from father to tiny tot, can be catered for in the same department. The blue poplin ski-jacket, 5 gns., is bloused at the waist, and worn with black ski-trousers, £7 17s. 6d. Bright woolly scarf and cap, £2 7s. 6d. the set. Black mitts, £1 8s. 6d., goggles, £1 16s. 6d., ski-boots, 8 gns. The ski-sticks cost £4 10s.

For after-ski and spectator wear, a white, brushed-wool over-blouse, with black, ribbed-knitting collar and cuffs. The blouse, also obtainable in red and green, may be worn belted. Price 7½ gns. Black, knitted stocking cap, 15s. 6d. Both from Marshall and Snelgrove's "Play Deck."

OUR FASHION PORTFOLIO (continued)

When you've shaken off the snow....

After ski-ing, the need for utter relaxation, colour, ease and warmth, has created a new fashion demand. Now fulfilled by the world's leading designers, the result is clothes that we can all wear to lounge in, not only in hotels and bars, gay interiors, with the snow forgotten outside; but at home, by the fire, with fog and damp everywhere; for friendly dinner and cocktail parties; for the endless occasions when one wants to be comfortable and look charming. *Vorlagers* have given the line to the tapered slacks that have become our inseparables. Long, loose sweaters, first designed for sport, now appear in velvet or soft jersey, jewel-decked. As a contrast, a *decollete* blouse in rich fabric may be worn with slacks. There is no end to audacity in the mingling of style, colour, fantasy and fabric, so long as the result is complete freedom, luxurious warmth and essential femininity.

A bright yellow felt jerkin, casual as can be, price 5 gns., is worn with black, jersey, tightly-fitting jeans, £6 16s. 6d. The pom-pon trimmed cap costs 16s. 6d., and the knitted "slip-sox," with their stiffened soles, 19s. 6d. All from Simpson's.

A deliciously voluptuous blouse, that could appear above a skirt at the most formal party, is amusing here, worn with black jersey trousers. Obtainable in satin, faille or velvet, in various shades, prices from 11 gns. From Young Liberty, Regent Street. The black velvet, flat pumps, gold-embroidered, are by Joyce.

A three-piece for after-ski wear, in grey worsted. The low-cut top and slim-fitting slacks, 16 gns. The enormous skirt, with two slits, lined with gay silk, 20 gns. From Young Liberty.

OUR FASHION PORTFOLIO (continued)

Elegant Economy

A priceless discovery for the woman who demands supreme elegance with the maximum of economy, is Morell Dresses, 23, Curzon Street, where Mrs. Morell will make to measure or adapt her existing models, with sympathy and skill at most reasonable prices. She also has a range of Paris and Viennese jersey and knitwear, very original, although not exclusive. We show here for after-ski or house wear a thick, cosy, yellow, brushed wool skirt, trimmed with black wool-ribbing, for 8½ gns., and a black, wool-jersey sweater, with a charming top, 3½ gns.

Your hair in this

style which style? that

style the other style how

can you tell? let me see your face

style your hair style

your personality

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FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Shopping Treasure Hunt

By SUSAN CARR

I RATHER suspect that if I urge you to girdle your waist with steel you will think that either I am suffering from the delayed effects of Christmas, or that I shall be telling you next that hair shirts are a sure protection against winter ills and chills. But, as a matter of fact, the dress belts I have in mind are made basically of springy steel, though disguised by elegant coverings of leather, imitation crocodile, black patent or gold or silver kid. These belts are extremely comfortable and can be worn with the two ends just meeting or overlapping, but look equally attractive if they fail to meet by about an inch or so. I must warn you that there is a tendency, when first fitted, for the ends of the belt to press into your middle, but this can be easily overcome by gently bending the steel spring. Several manufacturers are now putting these belts on the market, but one make which I have personally tried and can recommend is called a *Hug-me-tite*.

* * *

When having dinner with some friends the other evening, I saw that they had some unusual and effective table decorations. These were candles in the form of floating water-lilies and were arranged in a dish of water with live, floating flowers—gardenias, in this case. I have since discovered that the water-lily candles burn for approximately three hours and that if the water in the container is of the temperature of the room the candles have a longer life. The water-lilies are decorative as long as they are alight, because the outer edge and leaves do not burn.

* * *

Far too frequently reports appear in the Press about accidents to small children who have helped themselves to pills or capsules intended for adults. An inexpensive new Safety Container can do much to prevent these accidents, as it has a special safety cap which can be opened by an adult pressing it on the centre, but which would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a small child to open. This captive cap cannot get lost because it is attached to the container by an ingeniously designed "anchor." The container is securely closed after use by pushing down the cap and pressing the sides.

* * *

Many elderly people, as well as those of all ages who suffer from rheumatism or kindred complaints, have great difficulty in bending and straightening up, which tends to make such everyday tasks as putting on shoes really painful. These people will be pleased to know that they can buy a shoe-horn fixed to the end of a whangee cane which is sufficiently long to obviate any bending. I gave one of these to a lumbago sufferer for Christmas and her delight made me determined to tell you about them. Incidentally, the cane can be unscrewed from the horn shoe-lift for travelling.

* * *

I can recommend the "Hold-Rite" roasting rack, now in the shops, which allows heat to circulate freely around a fowl or joint. The roast or fowl browns evenly, basting is unnecessary, and there is less shrinkage. The rack can be used either in an open pan or in a covered roaster; it can also be used flat for grilling steaks, chops and so on. When opened flat, it is also extremely useful in the kitchen as a cooling rack for cakes and biscuits.

* * *

In between my tours of the shops in search of treasure, I find myself scanning the newspapers for interesting things to tell you about. Sometimes the most promising clues lead to disappointment when I follow them up, but occasionally the results are very worth while. Quite often I derive a certain amount of amusement in the course of my clue-hunting, as I did the other day when I was quietly ambling through the FOR SALE column in a West Country newspaper. My eyes fell upon what I think is the most macabre advertisement I have yet come across. It read: "UNDERTAKERS. 3 biers, 25s.; bacon slicer, 70s.; fire extinguisher. Write Box XXX." I noted that no price was quoted for the fire extinguisher.

How Much It Costs And Where To Find It.

Hug-me-tite belts: imitation crocodile and black patent, 8s. 11d.; leather, 10s. 11d.; gold and silver kid, 15s. 11d.; Whiteleys.

Water-lily candles: 11s. 6d. for four; Derry and Toms.

"Kidipruf" safety container for medicinal tablets: 1s. each; Boots and other chemists.

Whangee cane and horn shoe-lifts: 25s. 6d. to 32s. 6d. according to length (from 16 ins. to 24 ins.); The General Trading Company, 5, Grantham Place, W.1.

"Hold-Rite" roasting rack: 7s. 6d.; Fortnum and Mason.

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Printed in England by The Illustrated London News and Sketch, Ltd., Milford Lane, London, W.C.2, and Published Fortnightly at the office, Ingram House, 195-198 Strand, London, W.C.2. Wednesday, January 13, 1954. Re-entered as Second-Class Matter, August 15, 1941, at the Post Office at New York (N.Y.), under the Act of March 3, 1879. Postage Rates:—Inland 2d. Canada 1d. Elsewhere Abroad 2d.